



## A Pre-Purchase Inspection Checklist for Classic Cars

Getting a classic car inspected by a mechanic is a good idea before purchasing. The first step toward buying a classic car should not be a short test drive.

By doing so, you will be able to decide if this is a car you truly want, how much you are willing to spend, and what repairs might need to be done once you acquire it.

### Classic Car Inspection Checklist

- **A professional appraisal is important:** When they examine the vehicle, they may be able to tell if it was in an accident and whether the engine and other vital components are original. This will affect the value of the vehicle.
- **Check the car's title:** Run a VIN check and obtain a used vehicle history report to determine if the car is registered to the seller, whether it has unpaid debts, and whether it is legitimately registered to the seller.
- **Check for rust damage:** Rust is to be expected on cars, but significant rust suggests the car has not been properly maintained. It can also be an indication there may be more serious problems with the vehicle.
- **Check interior:** Ensure that all seats, upholstery, badges, radio, dashboard, and emblems are in good condition, or if they aren't factory originals. These things can be expensive to find and replace.
- **Check exterior:** Take a look at the car in daylight. You should check the paint, look for obvious dents, and welding marks, and check for misaligned or mismatched panels.

- **Do a mileage check:** It's best to have the lowest mileage possible but watch out for mileage scams. Be alert to mileage scams. There are sellers out there who try to trick buyers by saying a car has fewer miles than it does.
- **Get It professionally inspected:** Make sure that you always get the car inspected by a professional since you may save a considerable amount of time and money if you do.
- **Drive the car before buying it:** This is an excellent opportunity to identify any problems. Make sure you pay special attention to anything that sounds unusual. It's not good to hear squeaking, grinding, and clunking!

## What is the purpose of checking the VIN on a classic car?

Make sure the VIN on the classic car's title matches the VIN on the car and its parts. A failure to do so could indicate:

- **Accident damage:** Consider looking elsewhere for your classic car purchase if a seller tries to hide a car's history.
- **A major rebuild:** Getting a classic car back into shape may require parts from multiple models, so the VIN on a classic's major parts may not match the car's. Ensure any major work has been done is disclosed to you by the owner.
- **Theft:** A vehicle VIN that does not match the title may indicate that the car was stolen and has a counterfeit title. Be sure the titled VIN of the car matches the one in front of you when purchasing it from a private seller.

The National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) has approved a few data providers to access its theft database. To find out the history of your classic car, you can run a VIN check with any of these providers.

## What To Look For in Body Panels?

The following items need to be looked at when inspecting the body panels of a vehicle:

- Check for gaps between panels to see if the frame has been damaged. An uneven gap may indicate an accident repair.
- Examine the exterior of the car and note any scratches, dents, discolorations, rust, or blemishes.
- Check for signs of rust, collision, or flood damage
- Examine the undercarriage, including the frame and subframes.
- Inspect underbody components such as floor pans, trunk pans, and rocker panels.
- Ensure that the body panels and paint are fitted, finished, and in good condition

## What To Look For In An Overall Condition?

To assess a vehicle's overall condition for a pre-purchase inspection, look for the following:

- Examine door panels, upholstery, carpets, consoles, seats, headliners, and dashboards for damage.
- Check for spare wheels, tools, and accessories.
- Check the condition of the trim, chrome, stainless steel, plastic, lenses, glass, and emblems

## How to Inspect Tire?

Check the following things when inspecting tires for a pre-purchase inspection:

- Take note of the condition of the tires, whether they belong to the same brand or not, or if the sidewalls are bubbling or cracking.
- Keep an eye on the tread. Classic car tires should have at least one-third inch of tread left. There may be a suspension problem if the tread is uneven.

## What To Look For When Inspection Engine?

- Check for grease, leaks, coolant, and fluid levels.
- Conduct a thorough inspection of the entire under-the-hood compartment before you buy a car.
- Ensure that the engine, drive train, and brakes are in good working order.
- Make sure all levers, lights, switches, accessories, and controls operate properly
- Conduct a road test drive (if possible) to check steering, gear shifting, suspension, braking, and engine operation.